USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

IMPLICATIONS OF NATO ENLARGEMENT

by

Lieutenant Colonel ERIC A. KIVI
United States Air Force

Mr Reed Fendrick
Project Advisor

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

| 1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 07-04-2003 | 2. REPORT TYPE | 3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) xx-xx-2002 to xx-xx-2003 |
|---|---|---|

**4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE**
Implications of NATO Enlargement
Unclassified

**5a. CONTRACT NUMBER**

**5b. GRANT NUMBER**

**5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER**

**6. AUTHOR(S)**
Kivi, Eric ; Author

**5d. PROJECT NUMBER**

**5e. TASK NUMBER**

**5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER**

**7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS**
U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks
Carlisle, PA17013-5050

**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**

**9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS**
,

**10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)**

**11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)**

**12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**
APUBLIC RELEASE
,

**13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES**

**14. ABSTRACT**
See attached file.

**15. SUBJECT TERMS**

| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR) | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 30 | 19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Rife, Dave RifeD@awc.carlisle.army.mil |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. REPORT Unclassified | b. ABSTRACT Unclassified | c. THIS PAGE Unclassified | | | 19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number DSN |

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18

# ABSTRACT

AUTHOR:     ERIC A. KIVI, Lt Col, USAF

TITLE: IMPLICATIONS OF NATO ENLARGEMENT

FORMAT:     Strategy Research Project

DATE:       07 April 2003          PAGES: 30          CLASSIFICATION:  Unclassified

NATO has been a fulcrum of US national security since its inception in 1949, cementing an American relationship with Europe while defending the continent against the Soviet Union.  The security environment has changed since the end of the Cold War and NATO is still seeking clear definition of its role.  While it searches to redefine itself, NATO has embarked on another round of enlargement,  inviting seven additional countries into the alliance to bring the total to 26.  This paper reviews the enlargement process, the rationale behind inviting the individual countries and the implications of enlargement, especially as it pertains to Russia.  Despite Russian acquiescence in enlargement rounds one and two, the concept of NATO enlargement is not completely accepted in Russian policy circles.  Even while expanding, NATO must capitalize on opportunities to instill trust with Russia and its military.  For the US, a bigger more bureaucratic NATO will require a continued strong US role to ensure NATO defense priorities are not diffused by the EU.

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IMPLICATIONS OF NATO ENLARGEMENT

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper will address the implications of NATO enlargement starting with a review of the background behind the decision to enlarge the alliance and a description of the accession process. NATO is at a crossroads; for the last decade after the Cold War ended, NATO has had to search for an identity. Since it was born out of conflict with the Soviet Union and faced a formidable military foe, it developed a personality and capabilities that served a purpose for the security environment for the time. Even in the last decade the security environment has changed yet again and could potentially be more dynamic in the future. So as the environment changes, NATO has been forced to consider the emerging external security threats to Europe as well as the internal political forces at work in a continent under transition from division to reunification, from command economies to free markets, and from totalitarianism to democracy. Despite these changing forces at work, NATO has stayed remarkably focused on remaining relevant for the future, a testament to the importance the member countries place this alliance.

**BACKGROUND**

Since its inception in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the fulcrum of transatlantic and inter-European security.[1] NATO provided a transparent mechanism of military cooperation that not only served to defend Europe from the Soviet Red Army and the Warsaw Pact, it inextricably linked the security of the signatory countries and provided an acceptable mechanism for German rearmament and a continued U.S. military presence in Europe. As such, and because the security of the United States is so tied to a strong, stable, and secure Europe, NATO has also been at the foundation of U.S. national security success since World War II.

While NATO's charter never specified a specific threat from a specific country, there was no doubt that the Alliance's focus was on the Soviet Union. As such, the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought a number of questions about the future and the relevancy of NATO. Recognizing the diminished the military threat from the east, and in an effort to adapt the alliance the to the new environment, NATO embraced a number of cooperative security initiatives that served to secure the gains of the Cold War victory and enhance European security. When Germany reunified, the Germans realized they had significant security concerns from Poland, Czech Republic and other countries to their east. NATO initiated Partnership for Peace (PfP) in an effort to address those concerns and to shape the security environment as

the countries of the former Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact transitioned to a Western-style democracy.  The PfP program was seen as a vehicle for multilateral outreach that could export stability to a region undergoing transformation.[2]  In addition to PfP, NATO developed programs the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) to ensure the alliance's effectiveness and relevance.[3]  In response to increasing pressure from countries on the outside to achieve full NATO membership, especially from the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia), NATO considered inviting additional members into the Alliance.  In 1995 in an effort to further erase the dividing lines in Europe, NATO produced a *Study on NATO Enlargement* which formalized the enlargement idea and outlined the Alliance's expectations for any new NATO members.[4]  The Alliance recognized that the few countries were ready for immediate membership and that former communist countries would need to implement a number of reforms in their economies and militaries before joining the Alliance. Programs like PfP and EAPC allowed gradually increased participation and upgraded and integrated military capabilities.[5]  In 1997 at the Madrid Summit, Alliance leaders invited the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary to become full members of NATO.  Then in 1999, NATO not only welcomed the three new members, it opened the door for additional countries to join the alliance and offered to assist in their preparation for membership.[6]  The NATO Charter and NATO and U.S. leaders were adamant in their declarations that "no European democratic country would be excluded from consideration."[7]

In the early days after the Cold War there were many who feared NATO enlargement and argued against it, including President Clinton and his Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbot. Those who opposed expanding NATO feared needlessly antagonizing a newly democratic Russia.  However, many others, and eventually President Clinton, recognized the "moral imperative" of bringing the eastern European countries into the sphere of the democratic West to atone for the division of Europe following World War II,[8] and more importantly to anchor new democracies to the West.  Membership in the NATO and European Union  (EU), the two most important multinational alliances in the West, was viewed to be the means to ensure these former communist countries severed their ties to the east, and looked to the west for their support.  Europeans are determined to erase the scars of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact and the Yalta Agreement which divided the continent with an Iron Curtain.  Eventually the Clinton Administration saw how NATO enlargement fit into the administration's larger strategy of democratic enlargement—spreading the values of freedom and democracy around the world. The current Bush administration is just as convinced of the need for enlarging NATO; President Bush's National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSS) is explicit in its

balance-of-power philosophy--"organizing coalitions—as broadly as practicable—of states able and willing to promote a balance of power that favors freedom." The current U.S. policy as stated in the NSS is to "expand NATO's membership to those democratic nations willing and able to share the burden of defending and advancing our common interests.[9] President Bush has also recognized the moral appeal to enlargement when he suggested the failure of NATO to invite all new European democracies into the NATO would be the equivalent of Yalta and Munich conferences that divided Europe.[10]

From the candidates' perspective there is a strong motivation to join NATO in order to share in the collective security of the Alliance. NATO's use of transparency and confidence-building measures assures members and permits them to focus on domestic and economic issues rather than basic security.[11] Although NATO membership does require members to maintain adequate defense spending and fit their military forces into NATO-compatible models NATO membership adds stature and offers an opportunity to improve organic defense capabilities while enjoying the umbrella of protection of a formidable defense organization, not to mention the associated link with the U.S., the world's sole remaining superpower. To the candidate countries, NATO membership was also seen as a way-station enroute to membership in the European Union.

**NATO ENLARGEMENT—ROUND ONE**

In the first round of enlargement, NATO applied the basic principles as laid out in the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement:* NATO should accept applicant countries based on their democratic credentials, ability to contribute to NATO's collective security, and their membership enhancing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.[12] Given those guidelines, the first new members—Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary—were more qualified to accept membership. The first round of enlargement is largely viewed as a success and it is that success that has led Alliance leaders and member nations to consider future enlargement.

The fears of enlargement never materialized—military effectiveness does not appear diminished; the costs are manageable; and there is no evidence that NATO has lost any secrets to former communist officials with ties to hostile powers.[13] There was a fear that the new members would drain resources from other NATO initiatives, but those fears have been allayed.

Each of the new NATO members has made significant economic progress. The gross domestic product (GDP) real growth rate of each new member shows a swift and strong transition to a market economy.[14] Since their induction into NATO, Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic have made positive contributions to the Alliance. In some areas, their

contributions exceed those of veteran members.[15]  Even in defense spending, the new members are pulling their weight compared to established NATO members; NATO's goal is 2.0 percent of GDP has the minimum apportionment for defense spending: Poland spends 2.0 percent, Hungary spends 1.6, and Czech Republic spends 2.2 percent.  The three new members spend at or above the Alliance's median (Italy at 1.7 percent).[16]

Integration of the militaries into NATO is progressing, but slowly.  All militaries have retained conscription even while downsizing.  Their defense spending per troop remains relatively low.  Their militaries are still equipped with obsolete Soviet equipment and transition to NATO-standard equipment, tactics, and training will proceed as funding resources will allow.

Despite the military problems with military integration, the new NATO members are contributors to NATO's mission.  In the Balkans, all the new members have contributed troops and equipment to maintain NATO presence.  Each of the nations has a battalion in Kosovo now and has contributed forces since 1999.  Hungary has provided important access into the Balkans, especially during the Kosovo operation.  The Czech Republic was the first to send troops to Macedonia, and the Czech military has a renowned capability for consequence management,[17], far exceeding the capabilities of other allies.  It also has a robust field hospital capability and is a key contributor to Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

## THE ROAD TO MEMBERSHIP—ROUND TWO

NATO instituted the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in April 1999 to formalize the assessment and the accession process for future rounds of enlargement following the addition of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic to the Alliance.  Like the programs PFP and EAPC, the Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a program that allows candidate countries to transition to NATO membership.  Its function is to help candidates "with advice, assistance, and practical support on all aspects of NATO membership."[18]  MAP offers a framework in which individual candidate countries can prepare for membership while also allowing NATO to be involved in any reforms within the candidate government or military.  MAP is also a tailored program of activities and exchanges.[19]  As such, MAP gives NATO an opportunity to shape any potential country to address areas of concern.

There are five chapters in MAP:  (1) political and economic issues; (2) defense/military issues; (3) resource issues; (4) security issues; (5) legal issues.  Each candidate country prepares a detailed annual plan with activities designed to further alliance compatibility in each area.  In addition, bilateral mechanisms of cooperation between candidate countries and major

NATO members allow further guidance on progress toward membership. An example may be bilateral engagement activities like security assistance between Romania and the United States.

There are nine current MAP countries and NATO offered invitations for membership to seven of those. The seven candidate countries are: Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. These invitees may be ready to join the Alliance as early as 2004.[20] The other two MAP countries, Albania and Macedonia are not currently considered ready for membership into the Alliance but will continue to be candidates for future membership.

There are other countries in Europe who could be considered future candidates. Austria, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, and Switzerland—all neutral--are among the largest, and probably the most capable European countries who remain outside NATO but could immediately make positive contributions. Other future candidates would be Croatia, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Malta.[21] Ukraine, one of the most active participants in PfP, is now aggressively pursuing full NATO membership.

There was some debate within NATO on exactly how to enlarge—whether to offer invitation to one country at a time, be selective and make a discriminating choice based on immediate compatibility and readiness, or even whether to delay the decision completely in order to make other organizational changes first. Given the irreversible momentum of the NATO's invitation and the Bush Administration's stated position to enlarge, it is doubtful NATO could have halted or paused enlargement without losing credibility. In the end, NATO decided to forego the "Big Bang" option—to invite all MAP countries to join in one fell swoop--and instead proceed under the "Regatta" option, to invite only those candidates were ready to positively contribute to NATO defense. Even then the disparate development among the candidates makes integration problematic and elevates the enlargement critics' concern that NATO decision-making will suffer under the weight of 27 members.

The positive contribution to Alliance security is an important aspect in garnering full political support in the present security environment. During the first round of enlargement, the U.S. Senate overwhelmingly supported the accession of Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary, but also went on record that new members must be "producers and not consumers of security."[22] This Regatta method leaves the door open for the other candidates to enter at a later date as was done during the first round of enlargement when only Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were invited. The remaining countries remain viable candidates provided they make and sustain the required reforms.

There are five distinct stages to the MAP process in ascending order:

1.  Develop military cooperation under PfP
2.  Step-up PfP participation and implicit or explicit formulation of aspiration to membership and actions within PfP to facilitate that goal.
3.  Build consensus within NATO regarding the given country's eligibility for consideration for membership, crowned with NATO's open recognition of the aspiration.
4.  Scrutinize in detail the pros and cons of the country's potential accession and discussion of the country's shortcomings in meeting membership pre-conditions,
5.  Negotiate within the Alliance as to when the country will be invited to join

Each of the MAP countries is at stage 4 with the exception of Albania and Macedonia, which are at stage 3. [23]

The invitation to join NATO is neither the beginning nor the end of the accession process. From the beginning of the engagement process, even during the PfP activities, the cooperative relationship between the candidate countries and NATO begins. For example, Ukraine has been one of the most ardent users of PfP and has a robust cooperation with NATO, especially in providing training ranges.

As was stated earlier, MAP offers an opportunity for the Alliance to conduct shaping activities for aspirants. These shaping activities could include defense or budgetary reform or military training. A more significant implication of MAP is that for those countries whom the Alliance desires to invite in the near-term, NATO has a stake in ensuring that the potential member makes a meaningful contribution to both NATO's collective defense and its peace operations. For MAP aspirants, NATO provides a "gray-area" commitment by placing them in MAP, and thus, NATO has a stake in ensuring they maintain a minimal credible deterrent. Otherwise NATO could find itself having to intervene early to assist a MAP country in an unexpected crisis.[24]

**SHAPING--RESTRUCTURING NEW CANDIDATE MILITARIES**

NATO has a stake in encouraging defense reform in all MAP countries regardless of when accession may occur. Defense reform is one of the big challenges for the candidate countries. The militaries of the new NATO countries were structured under the Soviet communist-style— the military was subordinate to the Communist party, not the civilian government leadership. The transition to civilian leadership is not as easy as changing command and control wiring diagrams; the change involves a complete change in mindset within the military and within the

population.  In some cases, the concept was confused with "decommunizing," which was taken to mean "democratizing" the military.  A military ready to fight for democracy seems natural for those in the democratic West, but in formerly Communist Eastern Europe, a "pro-democratic" military represents a politicization of the military.  In Poland, for example, in order to effectively restructure the civilian control of the military and its relationship with society, the new Polish government had to:

- "Decommunize" the armed forces
- Establish a civilian defense minister
- Establish a new organizational structure with new equipment and redefine the military mission
- Change the military education system, especially for officers[25]

Changing the mindset of the officer corps in former communist countries is not easy nor does it happen quickly.  Even the concept of civilian control of the military—a tenet of democratic government--is met with resistance.  The U.S., recognizing both the importance and the challenge of changing attitudes about civilian control of the military, created the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany.  The Marshall Center's goal is to expose senior officers from former communist countries to Western-style democratic military thought.  The goal is not easily achieved; an international fellow at the U.S. Army War College, a colonel in the military of a country in the former USSR, expressed his reservations of the concept as he disparagingly described the national security acumen of the current generation of civilian leaders in his country.

NATO also has an interest in ensuring each MAP country participates in NATO-sponsored peace operations in order to encourage the country's cooperative international behavior, instill a mindset conducive to collective security, and transfer military skills and expertise[26].  The candidate countries, eager to participate and to show enthusiasm to be part of the team will attempt to contribute to these operations.  NATO operations in the Balkans have provided an opportunity for the candidate countries to participate and begin the collective integration process.  The official NATO website lists 14 potential NATO members as participants in the Kosovo Force (KFOR).  The candidate countries see KFOR as an opportunity to showcase their capabilities.  For example, Estonia points to its participation in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and Kosovo as an indication of its willingness to become a "producer" and not "consumer" of security.[27]  Romania and Bulgaria have offered bases for Middle East operations.

MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLAN

There are seven areas when assessing a candidate country's suitability for membership:[28]

1. GDP growth
2. Per capita GDP
3. Attainment of market economy
4. Defense expenditure
5. Defense expenditure per troop
6. Attainment of democratic political institutions--
7. Strategic rationale--entails analyzing costs and benefits of including a new member in terms of *strategic position* – impact on NATO's main mission--and *armed forces*— additional requirements necessary offset by immediate military contribution.[29]

A detailed analysis of each country in each of the seven areas is beyond the scope of this paper; however some results are evident from the data. The nine MAP countries and the other possible candidate countries are not at all similar in their progress on economic, political, or military reforms to qualify for accession. Slovenia and Slovakia are the easiest choices because of their geo-strategic value near the heart of NATO and their economic and political progress. The Baltic States are advanced economically and politically especially when compared to the southern candidates, but problematic to defend and their membership was expected to elicit the most negative reaction from the Russians.[30] The southern candidates, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, and Albania have a long way to go to achieve and sustain the required developmental reforms, but France, Italy, and Greece support their invitation to bolster defense of NATO's southern flank. These southern candidate countries showed considerable support to NATO operations in Kosovo and offer additional support opportunities in future peacekeeping operations in the Balkans.[31] In addition to Mediterranean security, there are strong geo-strategic arguments in favor of a land bridge from Europe to Turkey.[32]

MILITARY FORCES OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS

In general, and although there is some differences in composition, size, and capability, the militaries of the nine MAP countries are not now compatible with the NATO militaries, especially those of the major NATO countries. A study by the Rand Corporation analyzed the militaries of the MAP candidates and came to the following conclusion: [33]

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- The low technology, sophistication, training, and readiness levels mean the individual states have limited potential to make military contribution to NATO given the nature of the security threats.
- Ground forces dominate militaries of these countries, yet the disparity in expenditure per troop between the candidates and the current members is an indication of difficulty in integrating these armies into NATO operations.
- The defense budgets are smaller than those of current NATO members of similar size. While many of the countries are experiencing GDP growth after economic reforms to transform to market economies, large defense budget increases are unlikely.
- Modernizing the air forces will be a significant problem—the candidate countries do not have the counter-air capability to ensure their own sovereignty; current aircraft are in a low state of serviceability; air force modernization is especially expensive and budget problems hinder modernization; the level of training of air force pilots, and current tactics, techniques and procedures will preclude operating aircraft up to NATO standards.
- While air force aviation will be difficult for the aspirant countries, army aviation offers a most likely contribution. Not only can army aviation require less expensive equipment, given the relative size of the ground forces to air forces, using army aviation to support those ground forces may seem to be a good investment.
- By far the greatest military contributions from the MAP countries will be access to airspace and the opportunity to provide quality infrastructure for operations in and around NATO's area of interest.

Even during MAP "shaping" operations, the military challenges identified above will be difficult to overcome given the relatively small budgets and the extent of reform needed.. However, if the invitee countries can continue to make progress in preparing infrastructure and investing in training "enabling" units--air traffic control, or military security police, for example— their militaries would be better prepared to integrate into NATO contingency operations.

**STRATEGIC RATIONALE**

The NATO invitation for membership represents a de facto commitment by the Alliance to defend the candidate countries. Consideration for membership implies that NATO views the candidate country of at least a minimal strategic importance that it is worth extending NATO's umbrella of protection. Thus, even in the interim while NATO assesses the candidate for

membership, there is an implicit commitment to take action if the security of the candidate country is threatened.  A crucial element of the decision-making process is the geo-strategic rationale for inviting a particular country to join.  A strategic assessment entails looking at costs and benefits of including a new member in terms of its strategic position and armed forces.  Strategic position refers to the impact a new member will have on NATO's main missions; armed forces refers to additional requirements for military forces that the enlargement would entail and the extent to which these requirements would be offset by the new member's military contribution to NATO.[34]

The 1999 Strategic Concept predicts NATO will continue to focus on the dominant mission of power projection for conflict management and conflict prevention as well as retaining the mission of collective defense of members' territory.  Since then, NATO has adjusted its primary focus to the war on terror.[35]  The nature of the terror threat is such that factors other than geography have strategic implications.

One strategic consideration is a member country's ability to project power unhindered in areas of likely contingencies.  Those countries near the Balkans and the Black Sea/ Mediterranean areas offer considerable strategic value.  Romania and Bulgaria especially contribute to a land bridge to Turkey and Greece, and are especially valuable with the security concerns in the Middle East.  Despite the awesome U.S. airlift capability, it pales compared to the transportation capability provided by truck and/or rail.  In addition, Slovenia, Slovakia, Albania, and Macedonia offer access to the Balkans and a land bridge to Hungary.  Thus, candidate countries near the Balkans or the Black Sea offer positive strategic contributions to NATO.

On the other hand, the Baltic States create long and exposed borders that need to be defended at added cost.  Adding the Baltics to NATO also immediately surrounds Russia's Kaliningrad enclave, providing strategic complication between Russia and NATO.  By contrast, the other six MAP countries create interior and easily defensible borders within NATO.

NATO's collective defense mission remains focused on NATO's eastern borders for the simple reason that almost all of NATO's land borders with non-NATO's countries are to the east, making that area the only possible site for a conventional military threat.  Other potential contingencies involve ballistic missile proliferation and potential threats from Islamist fundamentalists in northern Africa and the Middle East may pose to southern European members or to Turkey.  However the only conventional military threat that NATO sees as potential would come by way of an unexpected political shock in Russia and an end to cooperative NATO-Russian relations.[36]

**RUSSIA**

Any discussion on NATO, especially NATO enlargement, must consider Russia. The military threat from the east was key to the conception of NATO after World War II and while that threat has diminished, Russia remains a potential regional threat. Even after the Cold War and the relative strength of Russia's military paled compared to the combined threat from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, Europe had to concern itself with a country as large, well armed, and potentially as unstable as Russia as it attempts to transition to capitalism and democracy.

The East versus West mentality persists on the Russian side, as well. The prevailing popular view in Russia is that NATO is a threat to Russia's security interests. In 1997 Russia protested the first round of NATO expansion as the Russian Duma, the lower house of parliament, overwhelmingly approved two anti-NATO declarations citing NATO's expansion plans as "the creation of the largest military threat to our country over the past 50 years."[37] The Duma's action represents an understandable deep-rooted animosity toward NATO and especially NATO expansion. Russia's National Security Concepts of 1997 and 1999 both explicitly mentioned the strengthening military alliances and the eastward expansion of NATO as being among the primary threats to Russian national security.[38] NATO was born in a post-WW II period when the United States policy declared by President Truman stated that it "must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."[39] In the last decade since the end of the Cold War, the Russians have seen their status as a superpower diminished not only after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, but the additional military humiliation in Chechnya, subsequent expansion of NATO, and the war in Kosovo.

While there may be strong reasons for NATO enlargement from both the idealist and realist camps of international foreign policy, there are also arguments against. While Russia's current power is a fraction of the former Soviet Union, its geo-strategic position, stockpile of nuclear weapons, abundant natural resources, and the historic military capability of its people indicate a power potential that deserves respect. Many, including George Kennan the architect of the Cold War containment policy,[40] still fear that if NATO continues its expansion, Russia will react by slowing democratic reforms, returning to confrontational policies, and diverting resources against NATO instead of financing democratic and free market reforms. The overall effect would be to create the type of environment NATO is trying to avoid.[41] This concern for the Russian reaction was more vocal before the first round of enlargement. Through a more transparent dialogue between NATO and Russia through the Russia-NATO Permanent Joint

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Council (PJC)[42] and a more amenable leadership in the name of President Putin, Russian fears of NATO enlargement appear to have abated.[43]

The air war in Kosovo was a significant event in Russia-NATO relations.  In 1997, NATO had announced plans to add Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary to its membership.  In order to placate Russian objections, NATO created the PJC in order to formalize NATO-Russia relations.  Russia suspended ties to NATO when the crisis in Kosovo erupted and NATO decided to intervene despite Russia's objections, and without a UN mandate.  Russians viewed the NATO intervention as, 1) alarming in that Russia could not use its UN Security Council veto to stop the action and was not a equal partner with NATO; 2) confirmation that Russia had lost its equal footing with the United States as a superpower; 3) indication that its rights as a sovereign state were not absolute and incontestable as NATO took action against on an issue "internal" to Serbia.

Interestingly, even though NATO-Russia relations suffered after Kosovo, U.S.-Russia bilateral relations continued, especially after President Yeltsin's abdication.[44]  According to Russia's National Security Concept, Russia would continue to develop a constructive partnership with other states, with the relationship with the U.S., the top priority.[45]

In May 2002, NATO and Russia formed the NATO-Russia Council, supplanting the PJC and providing a forum for "discussion and decision making."  The joint statement from the Rome summit states:

> The NATO-Russia Council will intensify efforts in the struggle against terrorism, crisis management, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and defence reform, and civil emergencies, as well as in other areas.

Although NATO-Russia relations seem good and Russia has not reacted negatively to the announcement of NATO enlargement, Russia is most important to NATO's future security environment.  Russia grudgingly accepted Poland, Czech and Hungary in the first round of enlargement and it will accept Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria as these are much less central to Russia security concerns than Poland or East Germany.  In the past, Russia has strenuously objected to NATO membership to the Baltics because of the shared border, the isolation of Kaliningrad and the fact they were former members of the Soviet Union.  However, the Russian response after the invitation at the Prague Summit was muted.  Given Russia's continuing

economic problems and its reliance on Western assistance, it seems that President Putin has ceded the Baltics to NATO.

President Putin's benign view of NATO enlargement is not shared by other powerful members of the Russian policy circles, especially the Russian military. In fact, the military leadership opposed the government's position even during Yeltsin's administration and his accession to the first round of enlargement. From the military's perspective, the first round of enlargement and the subsequent Russian diplomatic and military impotence to affect NATO operations in Kosovo was a humiliation for the once great Red Army. Understandably, though, the military has a great institutional interest in portraying NATO's enlargement as menacing in order to fight for increased resources.[46] Unfortunately, other than its still formidable nuclear arsenal, the realities of the state of the Russian economy and military readiness limits the military's ability to make any stand against NATO. As an example, total revenue for the Russian government in 2001 was a mere 15 percent of the U.S. military budget. The Russian military received 17 percent of that—hardly resources enough to keep pace with NATO's combat capability.[47]

While Putin's reaction to enlargement round two was soft, NATO consideration of additional candidate countries may possibly elicit a more negative reaction. Partnership for Peace countries Austria, Sweden, Finland and Ukraine are mentioned as possible future candidates and given Sweden, Finland, and especially Ukraine's proximity to Russian population centers and the historical relationships, it is likely Russia would be unhappy with their accession into the Alliance[48].

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 provided President Putin an opportunity to seek a strategic partnership with the U.S. and NATO. That opportunity is likely responsible for his government's acquiescence to the next round of enlargement. He immediately endorsed a strong U.S. response to the attacks and announced that Russia would not oppose coalition forces in the Central Asia states. Putin's goals were clearly to show solidarity in the war on terrorism and to gain support from western leaders for Russia's on war in Chechnya. But from the Russian military's standpoint, the 9/11 attacks were a result of American policy which sought world domination.[49] President Putin also offered to share intelligence on terror threats with U.S. and NATO. Unfortunately, according to U.S. intelligence officers, the quality of the intelligence has been mediocre: usually filtered and biased.

Although initially hostile toward NATO enlargement, Russia is positive about EU enlargement—Russian Medium-term Strategy for Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union (2000-2010)" is aimed at the mobilization of "the

economic potential and managerial experience of the European Union to promote the development of a socially oriented market economy of Russia.[50]  While obviously Russia seeks to gain economically from EU enlargement towards its borders, it also sees continued EU defense integration through the European Security Defense Policy (EDSP) as means to separate U.S. and European defense and provide a counterbalance to "NATO-centrism.[51]

For NATO, the implication is clear—NATO must be sensitive to the prevailing view that enlargement represents a threat to Russian security.  Putin's cooperation notwithstanding, there is an underlying resentment in Russia within some powerful institutions for the West's encroachment on traditional Russian sphere of influence.  Russia, as the largest country in the world, and a permanent member of the UN Security Council can be a positive strategic partner as NATO strives to transition to collective security.  Energizing military-to-military trust building between NATO and Russia may pay big dividends for NATO security.  While Russia's military may not represent much of a potential threat to NATO, it could be a very effective strategic enabler and partner if "shaped" properly.

There are several areas of potential cooperation between NATO and Russia to further military-military relations and engender trust.  The first is already taking place in the Balkans where a Russian battalion is participating in Kosovo Forces (KFOR) and Russian troops are also participating in the Multinational Brigade-North in the Balkans as part of the Stabilization Force (SFOR).  This peacekeeping cooperation will allow troop-to-troop contact and develop a relationship between mid-level military commanders.  Second, terrorism threatens both NATO and Russia.  Sharing intelligence about international terror networks will make each more effective.  Opportunities to cooperation in operations (in the Pankisi Gorge of Georgia, for example) will allow the militaries to share operational art.  Lastly, the increasingly important Caspian Sea area and its vast oil reserves offer another opportunity to foster security cooperation.  The region needs the West's investment and technical capability to extract the oil and natural gas.  NATO and Russia have a mutual interest in ensuring economic and political stability in the area.  Given the history of ethnical conflict in the region with some major regional powers (Turkey, Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan)  the Caspian Sea will ample opportunity for NATO and Russia to cooperate, or conflict.

**NATO DECISION MAKING**

One major concern of enlargement is that NATO will become too big, too bureaucratic, and lose its ability to make necessary military decisions.  NATO operates on the basis of consensus.  What will happen to NATO's cohesion as the Alliance grows to 27 members?

Simple mathematics indicates that the greater the number of decision makers, the more difficult it will be to reach consensus and the level of difficulty in reaching consensus may get progressively higher.  A large membership requires greater coordination for joint interoperability and greater cost for information gathering.  There is also more potential for selective participation, freeloading, and non-compliance.

There were members of NATO who urged the Alliance to go slow with the decision to enlarge.  The arguments were that the enlargement debate was too politically focused.[52]  This concern stems from the perception that NATO's military capabilities need improvement and that diverting attention and resources toward enlargement would hinder other necessary reforms.  The nature of the U.S. military response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are viewed as a case in point:  the widely held perception was that the United States did not trust NATO's decision-making mechanism because of its experience in the Kosovo bombing operations in 1999.  The U.S. decision to conduct Afghanistan operations without NATO, despite NATO's invocation of Article 5 of the charter, was an indication that the U.S. did not want to get bogged down in the Kosovo-style targeting debates in Brussels while it saw the need for quick operations in Afghanistan.  Some of those who caution about adding new members fear that in an effort to integrate new members, important internal reforms would enjoy sufficient priority and not be fully addressed. [53]  This concern about NATO's ability to maintain viable and relevant military capabilities is important and must be confronted by NATO's current members, but is overshadowed by the larger and more symbolic political aspects of enlargement.

However the important question concerns the extent in which member countries maintain a common vision of security and develops bonds to facilitate cooperation within NATO.  In the near term, NATO and all member and candidate countries will be focused in their visions of security.  Not only have the terror attacks of 9/11 got everyone looking in the same direction, the candidate countries will want to proceed lock-step with the major players to show their team potential.  In addition, NATO's major members are integrated economically, politically and socially and for the time being will agree on the direction of their security efforts.  Another factor is that European Union membership is largely coterminous with European NATO membership with similar lists of candidates.  Membership will remain similar in the future and European countries have similar visions of security.

In the current environment where candidate countries are looking to show compatibility with NATO, it is unlikely that any potential candidate will act independently and not share the collective European outlook.  The general pattern to be expected is that the greater the new

NATO member's economic and political integration in the EU, the less likely that member is to pose substantial problems for NATO cohesion.[54] The longer a potential NATO member is a member of the EU before acceding to NATO, the less likely its accession is to cause problems of cohesion for NATO. From such a perspective, current EU members not in NATO (Austria, Ireland, Finland, Sweden) would pose few problems for NATO's cohesion.[55]

As NATO enlarges, and if it continues enlargement in a way that parallels and mirrors the EU, it is conceivable that through dilution, U.S. political influence in the strategic direction of NATO could be diminished over time. In addition, an independent-minded EU, possibly seeking to establish an alternative geo-political pole of influence independently or in partnership with Russia, may assert its own agenda in European security through internal NATO actions and diverge from U.S. policies.

**CONCLUSION**

NATO's decision to enlarge is based more of on political considerations rather than based on a strict military calculus; in fact there are few compelling military reasons for enlargement. But while the decision may be primarily political, as long as NATO retains aspects of a military alliance, it cannot be expected to forego strategic criteria and advantage in its decisions to extend security guarantees.

NATO faces a critical juncture in history. It has been a forceful and important element of trans-Atlantic security for over 50 years, and in the last decade, it has adapted to a post-Soviet security environment in Europe. Part of the strategy to deal with the political changes in Europe was a decision to accept all willing like-minded countries capable of sharing in the collective security of the continent. That political decision to enlarge represents a symbol of inclusion for all of Europe, especially those countries who were left behind the Iron Curtain after World War II. In its decision to enlarge, however, NATO must reinforce the positive and mitigate the negative effects of that enlargement, namely:

- Continue using lessons learned from the last round of enlargement and strive to shape required military, democratic and economic reforms of the current round of candidates. The MAP process provides the framework of shaping the candidate countries to be ready for full NATO membership.
- Resist the efforts of other security organizations to siphon resources away from NATO interoperability, readiness and infrastructure investments. From the American perspective, the United States must remain fully engaged in European security by

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seeking a leadership role to ensure our security interests are closely aligned and NATO priorities remain at the forefront of European NATO countries' defense considerations.

- Invest in developing and improving infrastructure along the perimeter of the Alliance to improve its ability to conduct operations in defense of the Alliance. NATO is seeking a collective security role and the one immediate contribution the new member countries can make to the strategic mission of NATO is their geographic access. Improving bed-down areas and transportation routes will improve the Alliance's ability to move quickly to counter out of area threats.

- Use the cooperation in the war on terrorism as a springboard to aid in military integration effort in NATO enlargement. Military integration must be accomplished in conjunction with legal, judicial and law enforcement cooperation to more effectively combat international terrorism. Integrating all aspects of the fight against international terror groups will provide positive synergistic benefits—improved intelligence, enhanced trust between partner countries, better operational planning, and more effective and responsive execution of counter-terrorism operations.

- Seek opportunities to develop cooperation with Russia, especially military-to-military, on shared security concerns like terrorism, and regional stability, and oil. The NATO-Russia Council provides a means for NATO to continue an open dialogue with the Russians to address mutual security interests. In order to allow the trust to seep into the institutions, the cooperation must be forced to lower levels.

- Avoid the tendency to grow bureaucratically and instead maintain an effective and relevant military capability. NATO must continue to develop current, modern standards; reinforce those standards through adequate procurement, resource allocation, and realistic training; and develop agile and effective command and control structures.

Enlargement remains a political decision. While NATO is a cooperative military alliance, the umbrella of NATO's security represents more than military cooperation and security, it is a symbol of inclusion. Even so, NATO must remain true to its military mission and ensure members--new and old—are both willing and able to contribute to security. So while NATO expands, the U.S. must also continue to encourage European members to address the imbalance in military capabilities of its current members in order to hold the new members to an objective standard. NATO must also address the organizational and warfighting concerns that the ponderous size and military disparity among member nations will hinder its effectiveness.

These efforts, in parallel to enlargement, will keep NATO the fulcrum of the West's security for the foreseeable future.

Word Count = 7014

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